

Tips for Coping with Strong Feelings, Big Changes, and Stress Surrounding COVID-19
Broadway Family Medicine, March 15, 2020
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For all of our front-line healthcare members who are providing direct care for patients in any capacity, THANK YOU. We honor and appreciate you. Remember how kind everyone was right after 9/11? Let's draw upon that gentleness, kindness, and support for patients, ourselves, our coworkers, our families/communities.

Remember our Mission Statement: "Broadway Family Medicine is committed to providing and teaching high quality patient and family centered health care in partnership with communities of need." North Minneapolis, and actually all communities, are "in need" right now, and we have important work to do.

When feeling scared and overwhelmed, draw upon why we are called to work at Broadway/NMMC. Every one of us has training, skills and experience that contribute to our mission. We can do it - together.

General tips that may be helpful for our patients, families, and ourselves:

- Breathe. (repeat)
- Limit 24/7 media exposure. Focus on credible sources (e.g., Minnesota Department of Health and the CDC)
- Stay connected - social media (in moderation), texts, calls, Skype, FaceTime, IG, twitter, etc
- Call (or text TalkWithUs to 66746) **SAMHSA's Disaster Distress Helpline** at 1-800-985-5990, if you feel lonely or need support. It is available 24/7, multilingual, free, and confidential. If feeling suicidal, call 911 or the suicide hotline: 1-800-SUICIDE.
- Focus on what you have control over
- Hobbies (jigsaw puzzles, sewing, crafts, making cards, etc.)
- Keep & create a routine
- Exercise every day. If safety or weather prevent you from going outside, consider the 7-minute workout: <https://www.nytimes.com/guides/well/activity/the-7-minute-workout>
- Consider daily gratitude journal
- Remember why you're doing social distancing: both for you/your family and for our community/state/country!
- Strive to make healthy choices in food
- Get outside *every day* & enjoy the sunshine & fresh air (but stay 6 feet away from people!)
- Check in on & support neighbors, elderly, friends/family (especially those that are quarantined)
- Engage in spiritual/religious activities if that is useful (e.g., prayer, meditation)
- Distract - good book, movie, games
- Realize it's very normal to feel anxious right now - and remember you're not alone

- Ask for help! Talk to a friend or family member
- Try new relaxation techniques (lots of good free apps out there like Calm)
- If you live with any emotional or addiction issues, realize that these may be heightened right now. Symptoms of depression & anxiety may temporarily increase. You may be more tempted to engage in behaviors that can create problems for you (e.g., increased use of alcohol/drugs/tobacco, eating more than feels right for your body, excessive online spending). If you notice these things, realize this is common during times of elevated stress - and check in with someone you trust. May consider online 12-step meetings <http://aa-intergroup.org/> or online SMART Recovery meetings: <https://www.smartrecovery.org/community/>
- Focus on the many ways in which communities are coming together to support each other

Online resources:

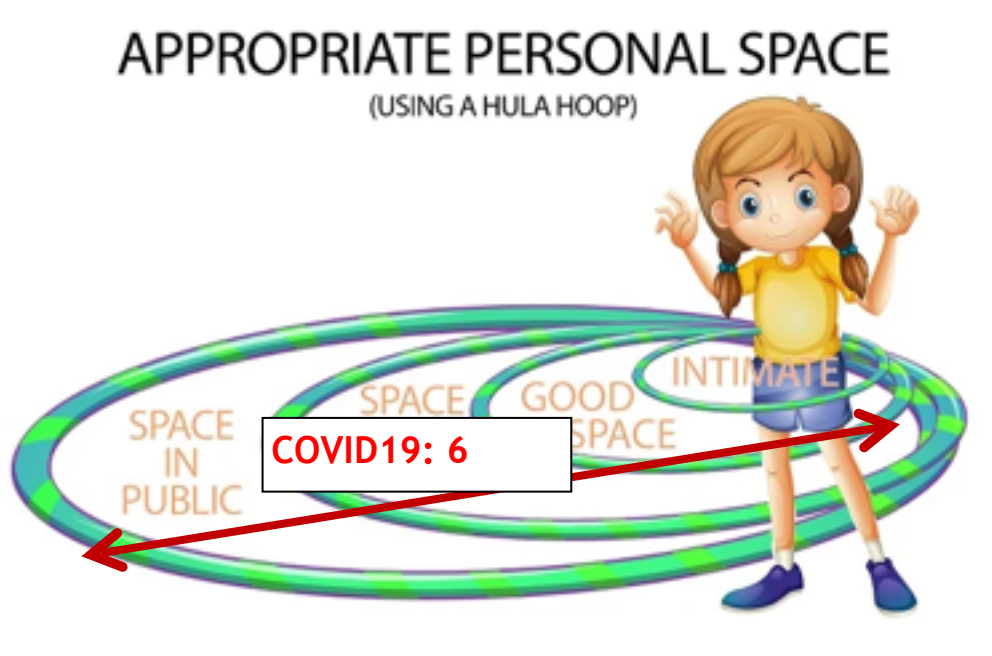
Taking care of your behavioral health: Tips for social distancing, quarantine, and isolation during an infectious disease outbreak: <https://store.samhsa.gov/system/files/sma14-4894.pdf>

CDC: Manage Anxiety and Stress: <https://www.cdc.gov/coronavirus/2019-ncov/prepare/managing-stress-anxiety.html?>

[Headspace](#) is offering its Headspace Plus guided meditations for free to health care providers in the US - provide your email address and NPI.

American Psychiatric Association: Taking care of ourselves during infectious disease outbreaks: <https://www.psychiatry.org/news-room/apa-blogs/apa-blog/2020/02/coronavirus-and-mental-health-taking-care-of-ourselves-during-infectious-disease-outbreaks>

(and...oh yeah....wash those hands, stay home if sick, and keep 6' away from people when you can)



Parents: Tips for your kids:

National Child Traumatic Stress Networks' GREAT guide for parents to help families cope with COVID-19: <https://www.nctsn.org/resources/parent-caregiver-guide-to-helping-families-cope-with-the-coronavirus-disease-2019>

- Have regular, ongoing open discussions as a family - encourage kids to ask questions
- Role model healthy coping
- Limit their exposure to the news
- Routines are super important - keep them up (e.g., bedtimes, meals, exercise)